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ABSTRACT

Noting that teachers stimulate student writing in three ways--by arousing, directing, and rewarding--this guide offers suggestions for activities in each of these areas for the elementary, intermediate, and secondary levels. Following an introduction, four activities are presented: (1) stimulating student writing through arousal, (2) stimulating student writing through directed thinking, (3) stimulating student writing through reward, and (4) combining these three areas into a fluid process to stimulate student writing on an individual assignment. The guide concludes with references and a bibliography. (HTH)

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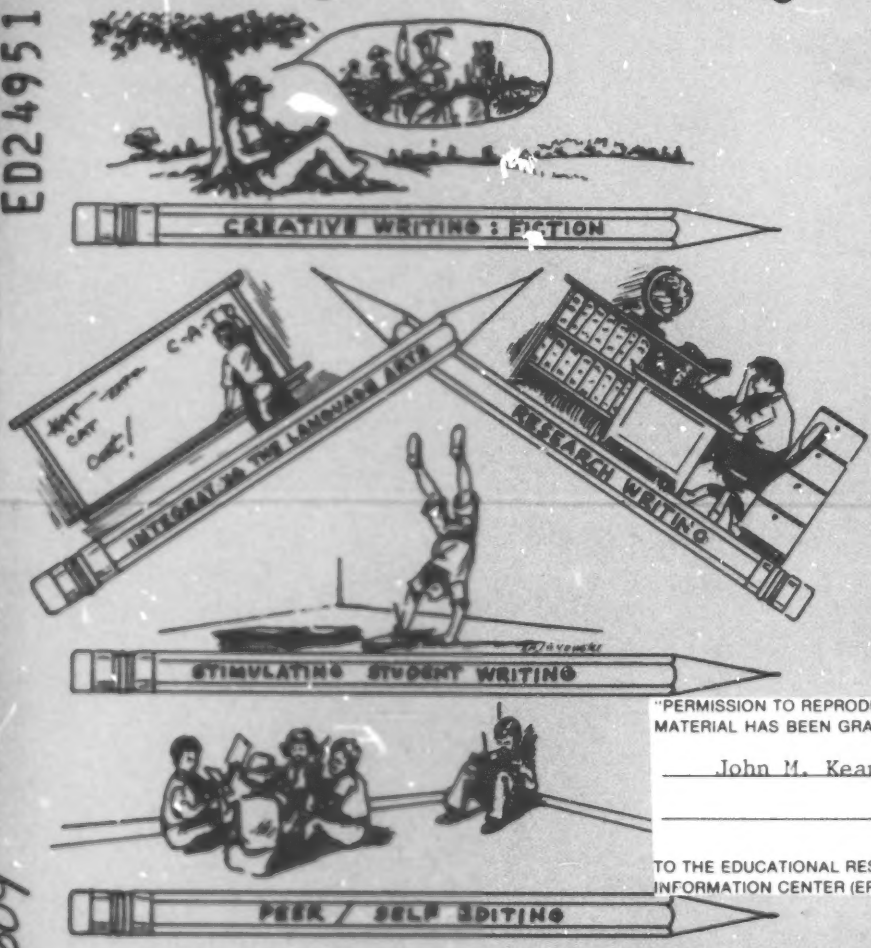
a GUIDE TO

Stimulating Student Writing



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Wisconsin Writing Project

1982

A GUIDE TO STIMULATING

STUDENT WRITING

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Teacher, You Want Me To Write-
Will You Help Me Want To Write?

You Say I Should Strive To Be Original, Unique-
Why Are You Like All The Rest?

You Keep Stressing Enthusiasm, Self-Motivation-
Teacher, Do You Ever Laugh And Let Your Hair Down?

Teacher, You Want Me To Express My Deepest Thoughts And Feelings-
Will You Share Your Private, Sensitive Side With Me?

You Expect Me To Meet Deadlines And Follow The Form-
Have You Ever Tried Doing As You Say?

Teacher, You Want Me To Care Enough To Write My Best-
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Teacher, You Keep Telling Me What You Want Me To Be-
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Teacher, You Expect Inspirations To Flow Freely From Pencil To Paper-
Teacher, Will You Please Inspire Me?

Don Hinz
Wisconsin Writing Project 1982

I. Foreword

Some thoughtful users of English try to insist that there is a distinct difference between the words "motivate" and "stimulate". Teachers stimulate students to action. Students motivate themselves. However in the colloquial use of both words, the distinction is seldom made.

Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary (Springfield, Massachusetts: G. and C. Merriam Company, 1977) provides the following:

Motivate: to provide with a motive: <questions that excite and motivate youth>

Stimulate: to excite to activity or growth or to greater activity <no example is given.>

A scan of the literature suggests that "motivate" is more generally accepted. The authors of this guide prefer "stimulate". However as they wrote, they noted that the consistent use of "stimulate" resulted in some awkwardness and ambiguity. Thus the words "stimulate" and "motivate" are used interchangeably.

The Editors

II. Preface

"The teacher is the primary mover in the motivation process."
Raymond Wlodkowski

Teachers stimulate student writing in three ways. They arouse, direct, and reward. Arousing is getting students excited about writing. Teachers create the spark and then fan the flame with enthusiasm. Directing is the next step in stimulating writing. By giving direction and order to the swirling mass of ideas children have, the teacher helps students focus and sharpen their work. Just as the simplest of buildings needs a substructure, so the student writer needs to form and build ideas. Rewarding is giving recognition to students who have made the effort to write, one of the most arduous intellectual tasks that students are called upon to do in our schools. Many corporations increase production by instituting monetary incentive programs. Workers earn more money when they produce. With rewards as incentives, students improve not only the quantity but also the quality of their writing.

It is often difficult to make a clear-cut distinction between the three areas of motivation, and no doubt a good teacher of writing makes use of all three methods of motivation at one time or another. For convenience, this guide has been organized so that attention can be focused on any of the three procedures, AROUSING, DIRECTING, or REWARDING, at three levels of schooling, ELEMENTARY, INTERMEDIATE, and SECONDARY.

Warning--a caveat

There is no guaranteed formula that insures student motivation for writing. Any procedure will be only as effective as the person who implements it.

III. Stimulating Student Writing Through Arousal

Introduction

As part of our definition, we are looking for ways to arouse the spark of ambition, the vitality of the individual, and to initiate behavior as it relates to all kinds of writing.

We need to inspire the behavior, the thinking, and the feelings of our students as they begin this process called "writing". Our goal is to transform all of our students into people who enjoy writing and are excited about writing.

In order to stimulate a student, we must keep in mind what the student brings to the paper. We must provide realistic enthusiasm by structuring classroom activities so that students experience success most of the time.

The following information provides specific examples of how to stimulate students to achieve the highest level of performance.

A. Stimulating Student Writing Through Arousal: Elementary

Writing can take on magical form at any age through the use of simple setting and costume. Special holidays present opportunities to stimulate elementary school students to write stories. Halloween is an especially imaginative one. Imagine that the classroom lights are turned out. From the record player come horrible, wailing, chilling, thrilling sounds of a haunted house. As the classroom door creaks open, a dark figured witch appears carrying a lit candle. In her hands is an old book entitled A GraveYard of Ghost Stories. She enters the room, sits at her desk, and reads the first story aloud to the class.

A part from a scary Halloween play you may ask? No, it's a starting point for a writing assignment which gets children creating their own fantasies and goblins. The eerie demonstration appeals to their senses and starts their minds churning with wonderful images of Halloween. After this carefully planned pre-writing scene, the children's imaginations are sparked, and they are now ready to weave their own tales of suspense and terror.

B. Stimulating Student Writing Through Arousal: Intermediate

(After reading the book, Toothpaste Millionaire by Jean Merrill, a student chose the following approach to a book report,)

As the class enters the room, they see a large cardboard toothpaste character standing before their desks. The students are curious.

The student, acting as Toothpaste Harry, begins by saying, "Today I am going to tell you. . .but first, tell me about the toothpaste you have in your house." (Class responds.)

"What are the flavors?"

"What flavors would you like if you could make your own toothpaste?" asks Harry. (Class response.)

Toothpaste Harry puts his homemade toothpaste out for display. There are samples of red, green, yellow, and blue toothpaste.

"Let me tell you how to make your very own toothpaste," says Harry.

Harry presents his talk on "How to Make Toothpaste". Following his presentation, Harry gives each child a "How to Make Toothpaste" guide in which he has listed the ingredients and steps for making the toothpaste. (The toothpaste is prepared by combining baking soda, water, artificial flavoring and food coloring.) Harry's next step is to provide each student with an opportunity to sample the toothpaste.

The student assignment is to write a paper entitled, "How to. . ." using any topic about which s/he feels comfortable. Even the most reluctant of writers will have something to write about.

C. Stimulating Student Writing Through Arousal: Secondary

Students write best about what they know best. And what they know best is, of course, themselves. This is the point at which techniques designed to arouse students to write must be directed by the teacher in order to motivate students to put pen to paper. Just such a technique is offered by Carl Koch and James M. Brazil in their book Strategies for

Teaching the Composition Process (Koch and Brazil, 1978, pp. 28-30). Koch and Brazil recommend the following strategy entitled "Value Exploration" as a pre-writing exercise for those high school students whose favorite response to any announcement of a composition assignment is "But I can't think of anything to write about ".

Group size: Entire class (twenty-five to thirty).

Time required: Usually about fifty minutes.

Materials: Duplicated copies of the value choices questions with instructions (a sample is included at the end of this strategy). Because you wish the students to jot down the reasons why they made the value choices they did, each student will need a pen and some paper. Also have ready duplicated copies of the composition assignment itself to be distributed right after the class discussion.

Goals:

A. To facilitate the making of difficult decisions about the course of one's life.

B. To generate ideas, experiences, and examples for a paragraph strong enough to support its topic sentence satisfactorily.

C. To motivate students to write from their experience by provoking cognitive and affective reactions.

D. To introduce or review the process of finding a topic by asking questions, making decisions and reflecting on past experiences.

Process:

A. Discuss the goals of the strategy with the class.

B. Pass out the instructions and the questions.

C. Read the instructions and ask for questions.

D. Give the students some time to complete the questions.

E. When the students have completed the questions, you should lead a general class discussion. Although any appropriate question may be discussed, here are some that you might use:

1. Which questions were the hardest for you to answer?
2. Which questions had the most immediate importance for you?
3. Which question caused you to think of the subject for the first time?

F. Once the class discussion is over, hand out the duplicated assignment sheets. The assignment includes the requisite elements (subject, speaker, form, purpose, and audience) necessary to keep the students from engaging in misdirected writing (Haugen, Kean, Mohan, 1981, p. 5).

1. Subject: what the student values and why
2. Speaker: the student himself
3. Form: a paragraph which begins with a topic sentence (the topic sentence could be nothing more than one of the questions on the "Values Questionnaire" restated as a declarative sentence and completed with the value item the student had chosen) and includes at least three reasons why the student places such great importance on that particular item.
4. Purpose: to inform others about what the student values most and why
5. Audience: the student's best friend or some other confidant.

Values Questionnaire

We make choices constantly. Listed below are some questions. Put a check next to the answer that most nearly represents how you feel and think about the question. Then, share your responses with the other members of the class (but only if you care to do so). Perhaps you will wish to tell why you made the choice that you did by giving reasons or examples from your experience. You may pass or [illegible]estion if you wish. Remember,

everyone in the class has a right to his or her own opinion, so listen carefully to the others. In doing so, you might even learn more about ,ourself.

1. Of the following characteristics, which do you think is most important for a friend of yours?

   a. Honesty
   b. A willingness to share
   c. Loyalty

2. Which would you least like to have?

   a. Little money
   b. Poor health
   c. A crippled body

3. If you were a member of the U. S. Senate, to which of the following would you give most concern?

   a. Defense
   b. The Nation's poor
   c. Exploring for fuel

4. If your father died and you had your own family, what would you do for your aging mother?

   a. Have her come live with you
   b. Admit her into a nursing home
   c. Get her an apartment of her own

5. Which of these is the worst problem in the local area today?

   a. Malnutrition
   b. Overcrowding
   c. Unemployment

6. Which of these would be hardest for you?

   a. Your father's death
   b. Your death
   c. A close friend's death

7. Which of the following do you value most?

   a. Wisdom
   b. Love
   c. World peace

8. Which would you rather do on your vacation?

a. Go to the relatives for a visit
b. Head to Colorado with some friends
c. Stay at home and relax

This list of questions is suggestive of ones that you can generate for your own class based on contemporary concerns in your community whether they relate to safety issues, drug abuse, bus fares, the high cost of medical care, raising the drinking age, registering for the draft, changing the starting dates for schools, changing standards for high school graduation, or nuclear disarmament.

IV. Stimulating Student Writing Through Directed Thinking

Introduction

Just like professional writers, students experience writer's block. Both groups of writers have many ideas, but they have trouble putting them down on paper. They need an organizational framework upon which to construct their ideas. The commonplace notion is that an imposed framework restrains creative thought, but often the opposite is true. Form can generate thought. Teachers can stimulate student writers by giving them direction. More complex organizational patterns can be introduced as student writers mature.

A. Stimulating Student Writing Through Directed Thinking: Elementary

Special Messages

Given a frame or structure, elementary students can write appropriate messages for greeting cards. Teachers can establish a Mail Center in order to provide students with opportunities to construct sentences and apply correctly the rules of capitalization and punctuation while they create their cards. The Mail Center can consist of a small table situated in a suitable corner of the room. Greeting cards are placed on the table, and above the table on the wall are greeting card phrases such as "Wish you Were Here ","Get Well Soon ", printed on brightly colored construction paper strips. Children can visit the Mail Center at an appointed time during the day to choose a greeting card cover they would like to take home to

a special someone. At their desks, they study the cards and decide what phrases would be suitable for their card. They are instructed to lengthen the phrases into complete sentences, which are then combined to form an appropriate message.

The teacher checks the completed cards, and the children return to the table to select an envelope for their card. They can create their own stamp by drawing and coloring one in the proper corner. With their receiver's name printed on the envelope, they hand deliver their special messages after school.

B. Stimulating Student Writing Through Directed Thinking: Intermediate

Before the lesson, cut several three-toed feet out of construction paper. While the students are out of the room, tape the mysterious feet to the floor leading to a closed closet.

To introduce this activity read to your students a short mystery story.

After the story, ask the students the following questions about the footprints:

1. What do you suppose entered the classroom?
2. Where did it come from?
3. How did it get into school?
4. What is it doing in the closet?
5. How do we get rid of it?

The next directive is to give the students an opportunity to look over the questions and then develop a mystery story of their own which includes answers to the questions.

C. Stimulating Student Writing Through Directed Thinking: Secondary

After a thorough reading and discussion of a literary work such as Arthur Miller's The Crucible, students usually have more ideas than they know what to do with, especially if a writing assignment is imminent. Write on a single aspect of the play, providing additional insight on that topic for an audience that has read it also? No way!

One way for the teacher to lessen the frustration students feel and to motivate them to write is to provide them with direction for their ideas. The following is one approach:

1. Assure students that they know far more about determining a suitable topic and writing a suitable essay than they realize.

2. List the things they know such as plot, characterization, theme, mood, tone, conflict, and point of view across the top of the chalkboard.

3. Ask a student to choose one of those elements listed. (They often like to choose characterization because they think it is the easiest, but the independent thinkers in the class will find their own areas and can easily apply the same strategy.)

4. Remind the students that without further restriction of the topic, they are committed to a complete discussion of everything the play has to offer about every single character. Such commitment could mean writing a book!

5. Encourage students to define a single aspect of a single character by reminding them that even if they restrict the topic to a single character they will probably be writing a twenty-page paper in order to discuss that character's appearance, personality, role in the play, etc.

6. Ask students to develop an insightful position on the single aspect of the character of their choice. For example, if the students have determined to discuss the personality of the Reverend Samuel Paris, they still must focus that discussion on a topic which will provide their audience with additional insight or a perspective of his character which the audience has not yet considered. One possibility here is a thesis statement which declares him unfit for his calling; that is, Samuel Paris is an unfit minister.

7. Discuss whys. To support their arguments, students must have reasons for believing as they do. After some discussion, the body portion of the paper can be broken down. He is greedy; he is hypocritical; he is self-centered; and whatever else the students decide can become the topic ideas for the body paragraphs of the essay.

8. Encourage students to refer to the play for supportive illustrations. At this time, the students are often one step ahead of the teacher and anxious to prove that they are right: "Remember in the play when he. . ." They also recognize the strength of direct quotation: "Right here he says. . ."

9. Work on an introduction which catches interest, states the purpose and indicates how the paper is organized.

10. Remind students that they are still committed to complete discussions of their topics.

11. Review the contents of concluding paragraphs, then move on to the composing stage.

Providing direction is a way for teachers to lessen frustration and provide motivation when students have something to say but aren't sure how to say it.

V. Stimulating Student Writing Through Reward

Introduction

Another effective motivational strategy, if used with wisdom and discretion, is the use of valued extrinsic rewards. In other words, once students' creative sparks have been fanned into full flame and final products have been produced, they enjoy knowing they may bask in the warm afterglow of receiving recognition for a job well done. This recognition may be given in many forms such as grades, stars, stickers, prizes or awards, informative comments, praise, publication, or public display.

Recognition serves to make students aware of progress and usually serves as incentive toward increased effort. However, the use of extrinsic rewards must be carefully monitored because indiscriminate use may render them meaningless and actually lead to a reduction in the quality of production.

A. Stimulating Student Writing Through Reward: Elementary

Most people require and seek praise and positive feedback. Teachers should give these two necessary stimulants to students to motivate them by giving them a sense of accomplishment. Here the teacher's role in providing positive reinforcement encourages students to continue to write.

Rewards can take many forms. They can be tangible scratch-n-sniff stickers or impulsive hugs. Let us look at some of the positive feedback techniques that can be used after a writing project is completed.

"Young Authors' Corner"

Young writers love to see their work as a finished product in book form for others to read and for them to look at again and again. Establishing a "Young Authors' Corner" for the display of children's writing is a positive way of telling them to "Keep it up. Writing is fun and you are doing a wonderful job".

"Speaking Stationery"

A single box of stationery can speak to children. When a child has done some excellent writing, use stationery for positive feedback. Write a message of praise about the child's written piece, put it in an envelope, and place it on the student's desk. What a feeling of elation the child receives after finding and reading your personal message! Try to find something good and important to say about each youngster's work so that each one receives a teacher message. A variation of the technique is for the teacher to write parts of the complimentary message on separate balloons and then tie them together to form a floating message. No matter what technique a teacher uses it is essential that he or she respond favorably, with some tangible recognition. A positive response by the teacher is one of the best ways to develop young authors.

B. Stimulating Student Writing Through Reward: Intermediate

One method of displaying examples of good student work is to set up a bulletin board entitled "WORKS OF ART". Empty, tagboard picture frames can

be hung at the beginning of the year and then filled and changed as examples of good writing are produced by the students throughout the year. The good writing might include such things as examples of a well constructed sentence or paragraph, a "perfect" job of proofreading and editing, exceptionally fine penmanship, outstanding creative thinking, a well written response to a social studies essay test question, an informative science report, or an original book report.

C. Stimulating Student Writing Through Reward: Secondary

Sometimes reward is downplayed by educators because it is an extrinsic motivator rather than an intrinsic one. The fact remains that one of the best ways to get students interested in writing is to dangle the carrot of publication in front of faces hungry for recognition. The oft-uttered saying prevails: everybody likes to see his name in print--even high school students.

A comprehensive discussion of using the reward of publication as a motivational device is provided in Gail Cohen Weaver's article, "Like Seeing Oneself in a Mirror, The Publication of Student's Literary Writings" in the May, 1979 issue of the English Journal. Weaver divides her discussion into the following parts: (1) submitting student work to professional magazines, (2) entering student work in writing contests, (3) submitting student work to regional anthologies, (4) submitting student work to local media, and (5) publishing student writing yourself.

An invaluable resource for the teacher of writing who wants information about magazines which publish student work is Creative Writing in the Classroom: An Annotated Bibliography of Selected Resources K-12 edited by Robert Day and Gail Cohen Weaver. For students whose work is

intended for an adult audience, the reader is referred to John Engle's article, "Giftedness and Writing: Creativity in the classroom," in the winter 1970 issue of Gifted Child Quarterly and Wilma Swearingen's "Student Writing That Sells" which appeared in the February 1970 issue of Today's Education. Another important resource is The Writer's Handbook edited by A. S. Burack. This book lists more than 2,000 markets for various kinds of writing such as fiction, articles, and poetry.

As far as entering student work in writing contests is concerned, Weaver suggests the Spring Poetry Festival of the English Journal. For other contests teachers can consult Creative Writing in the Classroom: An Annotated Bibliography of Selected Resources K-12, a book already cited, for information about contests held by Scholastic Magazine, Seventeen magazine, and Xerox Education Publications magazines. John Bennett's article "A Directory of Writing Contests" which appeared in the January, 1975 issue of the English Journal gives valuable information about writing contests sponsored by colleges and universities. The annual NCTE Achievements Awards in Writing Program is open to high school juniors nominated by their school English departments. Even though the winning entries are not published by the NCTE, some state affiliates of the NCTE and some colleges and universities do publish award-winning pieces from students of their states. For example, the anthology Twenty-Two Young Indiana Writers, edited by Josef Andrew and others and published by Ball State University, contains pieces written by the twenty-two 1977 winners of the NCTE Achievement Awards.

For a list of state affiliates of the NCTE, colleges, and universities that publish the writings of secondary school students, write to Ms. Leona Blum, Director of Affiliate Relations and Member Services,

National Council of Teachers of English, 1111 Kenyon Road, Urbana, Illinois 61801. For teachers wishing to publish an anthology in their own area, an excellent resource is The School Literary Magazine edited by B. Jo Kinnick who gives a great deal of practical advice. The author also reminds the teacher of writing not to rule out their own local newspapers and potential publishers of student writing. Short pieces might also be accepted for use by local television or radio stations.

In the section "Publishing Student Writing Yourself", Ms. Weaver stresses that recognition for student writing must be given if only through the school newspaper, or school magazines, or even class magazines, and books made by individual students. The author recommends to the teachers of writing in schools which do not have a literary magazine the title Magazine Fundamentals for Student Publications published by the Columbia Scholastic Press Association. Kinnick in her book The School Literary Magazine (already cited) offers beneficial advice to the teacher who wishes to produce a high school literary magazine.

Sandra Frey in her article, "This Magazine is'Rated K (for Kids),'" which can be found in the April, 1974 issue of Teacher magazine, describes how a school magazine project was undertaken by students in grades four through seven. She concludes that if children at relatively early ages could master such complex tasks as organizing materials submitted, solving problems of layout and design, and editing, then surely students of high school age could do likewise. In an excellent article entitled "Publish or Perish!: Writing Inspiration and Reward" appearing in the October, 1979 issue of the English Journal, John Marshall Carter gives a detailed account of how he succeeded in getting a class of secondary school English students to produce a class book.

Students are also enthusiastic about making individual books of their own writings. A thirteen-page booklet From Cover to Cover: Publishing in Your Classroom distributed by the Encyclopedia Britannica, Incorporated, includes step by step instructions on how to make hard-cover bindings for books. Susan Chambers' fifty-page Readers Write Books: A How-to-do-it Manual is another practical guide to making individual books.

Make no mistake about it. Holding out publication as a reward to motivate students to write has its dangers. Those students who feel too much pressure to produce high-quality writing may resort to plagiarism, for example. But on balance, the use of publication as a means of motivating students to use writing to express themselves is vindicated. Perhaps a passage by Wilma Swearingen quoted by Weaver in her own article expresses best how potent publication as a motivating force can be: "Creative writing, motivated by the possibility of publication, seemed to be a power that changed school days from hours of tedium to hours of thought and challenge and success." (Weaver, 1979, p. 90.)

VI. The Process Model of Stimulating Student Writing in Practice

Introduction

The three means of motivation (arouse, direct, reward) often occur independently. These same phases can also be viewed as a fluid process in which all three aspects of motivation are used to stimulate student writing on one particular assignment.

AROUSE

Teachers spark interest in writing about a particular topic before any actual writing begins.

DIRECT

Once enthusiasm is established, the teacher channels it toward a specific goal.

REWARD

Finally, the writer receives feedback and recognition for a finished piece of writing.

A. The Process Model of Stimulating Student Writing in Practice: Elementary

Arouse: Elementary school students' interest in writing can be aroused by creating a Monster Research Center--an enclosed space, set off by cardboard room dividers. On the outside of the dividers, signs such as Caution! Monster Patrol, Scary, Horrible Monster Inside, and Do Not Disturb the Monster can serve as the center. On the inside walls of the dividers, pictures and books about various monsters can help set the tone. Students can decorate a Monster Research Folder to decorate before they begin their search for information. A Monster Pledge, led by the teacher

with proper solemnity, of course, may also be included. With their right hands held high, the students promise to "protect the world, through (their) important research, from all kinds of monsters."

Monster Research Buttons made from colorful cardboard are worn whenever students enter the lab or write about monsters. With their interest in monsters sufficiently aroused, the monster researchers begin writing. Monsters everywhere, beware!

Direct: The teacher begins to direct student thinking with a series of writing assignments. For the first writing assignment, each student is required to create a Monster Encyclopedia. Drawing on information they have acquired from resources in the Monster Research Center, the students sketch and name the monsters they have created. Next they describe it, telling not only about its physical appearance, but also its place of habitation, its diet, and its origin. Following is an excerpt from a typical Monster Encyclopedia:

Black Dragon

This guy throws a fit when he loses fights. He once blew down a castle. Black Dragon eats everything in sight that is the color black. He can change into anything he wants. Yellow is his best color. Beware of his fire. It's hot!

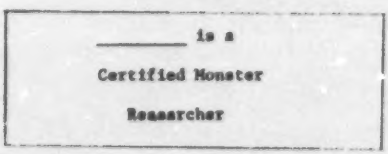
The second writing assignment requires students to compose their own monster stories. Before making the formal assignment, however,

the students participate in a brainstorming session to generate descriptive adjectives and verbs that tell what monsters do. When their monster stories are finished, the students write monster poems. To acquaint the students with poetic form, models such as the poem "The Middle of the Night," can be used.

Another language-related activity that can be included in the Monster Project is a review of the parts of speech. Brightly colored boxes labeled Monster Adjectives, Monster Nouns, and Monster Verbs are placed in the Center. Each student is required to write five words to put in each of the boxes. Once the boxes are stuffed with words, the students play Monster Sentence Match in which they choose a word from each box to form a sentence.

Reward: The children probably know a lot about monsters before the Monster Project is begun. A Monster-of-the-Week Contest may be held during the length of the Monster Project unit. For making their monsters, the children are permitted to use any materials they wish and to work at home with their families. At the end of each week, the best monster entered that particular week is selected and its creator is awarded a prize. Another reward of greater value is to have pictures of the winners and their prize-winning creatures appear in the local newspaper.

Not only the prize-winning children should receive recognition for their efforts. After weeks of hard work, all of the children can receive Monster Researcher Certificates.



B. The Process Model of Stimulating Student Writing in Practice:

Elementary/Intermediate

"Book Buddies"

"Book Buddies" is a story writing activity involving primary and intermediate students. Before beginning the project, it is essential for the intermediate teacher to do three things.

1. Obtain your principal's support.
2. Find a primary teacher who shares your enthusiasm for the activity, is willing to try a new approach to writing, and realizes the importance of writing at an early age.
3. Prepare and motivate your class to write with a primary student "buddy".

"Book Buddies" is on its way!

Arouse

These are arousal techniques you may find useful as you pave the way to good writing.

1. Invite local authors to share their writing experiences with the buddies. (Search your town for authors. They are out there.)
2. Share your writing and your feelings about writing.
3. Invite other student authors to speak about their writing experiences.
4. Tell the buddies that their finished stories will appear in the library for others to read.

Pairing the "buddies" can be done quickly and smoothly. Consider the following when matching the intermediate students with their younger buddies: personalities, study habits, friendships.

Students begin the story writing project with interviewing. The older student prepares a list of questions to ask the primary student.

Sample questions:

1. Do you have a pet?
2. What kind of pet is it?
3. Name?
4. How do you care for your pet? (food, shelter, exercise)
5. Why do you like your pet?

Interviewing generates ideas for their stories. Children are learning to converse as well as to be good listeners. They are also developing a friendship with writing as a common focus. Usually the teachers can fade into the background at this point; however, they are still present to respond to specific concerns or help meet individual needs.

Structuring

After the "Book Buddies" have completed the interviewing and have ideas for their story, they continue planning, accepting and rejecting, rethinking, and rewriting the story. Their ideas need to be structured into a plan of organized steps. Structuring helps the writer move smoothly through the composing process. The degree and nature of the structuring will vary depending upon the age level involved.

A student example might look like this:

I. My Pet

A. Kind
B. Physical characteristics
C. Personality

This answers the question: Who am I talking about?

II. Caring for My Pet

A. Shelter
B. Food
C. Exercise

III. Why I Like My Pet

A. Interesting Animals
B. It does funny things
C. Family member

As students become more confident and fluent in their writing, the plan may be less strictly defined, but structuring the assignment can continue to guide writing. In either case, the joint planning of the composition serves to provide motivation to the students while directing the writing task.

Checklist

An additional tool for providing structure for young writers is a checklist of teacher expectations. The checklist should be posted in a permanent place where it is always available to the writers. The checklist should be designed according to the age and writing ability of the students participating in the project. Here is an example.

Stories must have . . .

1. complete sentences.
2. capital letters.
3. end punctuation.
4. drawings.
5. two covers.

Reward

The "Book Buddy" writing project doesn't end with the finished story. Here are some culminating activities which provide closure and reward the students for their efforts.

1. "Buddies" read their stories orally to other buddies.
2. "Book Buddies" and the teachers receive bound collections of the stories written by the young authors.

3. A volume of the stories is presented to the school library for others to read.

4. The "buddies" can enjoy a social experience together, such as a luncheon or autographing party during which they celebrate the publication of their works.

C. The Process Model of Stimulating Student Writing in Practice:

Secondary

Example:

Arouse

The food in the cafeteria is not palatable; grading systems are unjust, and English classes are boring. High school students, idealistic and eager to take on the establishment, usually acquire several causes to champion not long after school begins. These causes can be good subjects for writing assignments. Class time set aside to discuss "what's wrong with the system these days" can be highly motivational for students who are always interested in issues which affect them personally.

Direct

Sometimes knowing what to write about and being interested in the topic are not enough. Enthusiasm wanes rapidly when writing teachers suggest that students declare themselves in writing. Some help from the teacher in determining an organizational pattern, a structure, a direction for their ideas can regenerate that enthusiasm.

A good structural model for such an assignment is the "Declaration of Independence." Students who have read it as a historical document can see it in a new perspective—as a writing assignment accomplished in the 1700's.

As a pre-writing experience, spend time analyzing the structure. Because the organization is quite apparent, students have little trouble

determining six basic parts:

1. a courtesy statement, which says if you're going to revolt, it is "only fitting and proper" that you tell those against whom you're revolting why you're doing so
2. a statement of what Americans believe in
3. a list of abuses (Students delight in the strategy here because the preceding list of beliefs allows Jefferson to show that many of the abuses are in direct opposition to what Americans believe in.)
4. an account of what Americans have tried to do, without success, to avoid resorting to revolution
5. the formal declaration of independence
6. and, finally, a statement of what Americans would be willing to give up in order to support their declaration

After looking at Jefferson's approach to writing a declaration of independence, students are far more comfortable writing their own. In fact, some of the declarations may become parodies in which students, at great personal sacrifice, are willing to stake their old, dirty tennis shoes, their little brothers, and their last year's chemistry assignments to support their favorite causes.

Reward

The knowledge that someone "in charge" will not only read but, perhaps, react to the students' concerns provides additional motivation for this assignment. The following audiences are available:

-the school newspaper or literary magazine

-teachers (history and political science teachers often write responses)

-administrators

-counselors

-cooks

-janitors

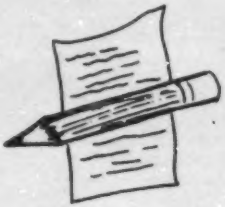
-school board members

-parents or peers

-anyone in charge of something (club advisors, athletic directors, student council members. . .)

-and, finally, with a minimum of planning, this writing assignment could be coordinated with writing assignments in other classes in which students are asked to write responses.

Taking time during the pre-writing stage to determine potential audiences is important to insure that each declaration is appropriate for its particular audience.



Writing is Life
My Life
All of it
If I can live it, I can write it

Writing is Environment
My Environment
All of It
If I can sense It, I can Write It

Writing is Emotions
My Emotions
All of them
If I can Feel It, I can Write It.

Writing is Thoughts
My Thoughts
All of Them
If I can Think It, I can Write It

Writing is Dreams
My Dreams
All of Them
If I can Imagine It, I can Write It

Writing is Life
Your Life
All of It
If I can Shake It, I can Write It

Writing is the Heart of Me
The Soul of Me
The Best and Worst of Me
If I can Be, Then Let Me Be Writing

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